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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 001929

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SUBJECT: JAPAN AF-PAK ASSISTANCE AND THE ELECTION(S)

¶1. Summary: (C) On the eve of Afghanistan elections, Government of Japan (GOJ) Special Representative for Afghanistan-Pakistan Motohide Yoshikawa re-iterated to AID Counselor the country's highest priority commitment to the region, echoing verbatim the USG's interests in a "secure, credible, and inclusive," process. Ambassador Yoshikawa will be following closely obviously the next several days and is looking forward to receiving U.S. Special Representative Holbrooke's on-the-ground assessment on 8/21. Amb.Yoshikawa also shared his view that the GOJ's commitment to Afghanistan development will remain strong regardless of which party wins the upcoming Japan elections. Yoshikawa expressed concerns about Pakistan progress and the languid rate of aid disbursement there, citing a dearth of concrete project proposals coming from the Government of Pakistan (GOP) since substantial pledges were made at the Tokyo donors conference in April. While Japan's assistance priorities of security/police sector, infrastructure, and agriculture for Afghanistan are mature, well-formed, and less likely to shift direction, Tokyo assistance to Pakistan is still nascent, the content of which may depend heavily on results of Japan's 8/30 elections. End summary

¶2. (C) Election Eve and DPJ view toward Afghanistan: In a 8/19 meeting with AID Counselor, Ambassador Yoshikawa re-iterated Japan's strong commitment to Afghanistan development, and ticked off his favorable impressions from a July visit to Kabul of a "booming," prospering country and good GOJ relationships with capable, committed Afghan government (GOA) officials, but also expressed concerns about what could lie ahead in the post-election period. Indicating that Japan aid in Afghanistan has tried to "follow the leaders," in directing assistance to sectors overseen by the GOA's most capable cabinet members, citing the ministers of education and agriculture as examples, Yoshikawa sees the government capacity issues as the number one challenge moving forward. In this context, Yoshikawa referenced concerns about individuals rumored to fill key posts in a would-be Karzai cabinet.

¶3. (C) Yoshikawa believes that Japan's strong commitment to Afghanistan is unlikely to sag, even if the opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) takes power following Japan's August 30 elections. He cited briefings he has been providing DPJ officials on policy and programs in region and a Kabul trip a couple years ago that he personally arranged for DPJ President Yukio Hatoyama, in which the now leading candidate to be Japan's next prime minister apparently came away impressed with Afghanistan efforts. Yoshikawa also pointed out for the DPJ the "big disconnect" between the party's pronouncements related to ending Japan's marine refueling efforts in favor of increased Afghanistan development, given that 90 percent plus of GOJ's current refueling operations is for Pakistan.

14. (C) Need More Pakistan Projects: Turning to the Pakistan picture, Yoshikawa sees different, if not greater obstacles to progress and success there on Japan development efforts. Amb. Yoshikawa, like MOFA Director General for International Cooperation Masato Kitera, is openly concerned about attaining results in Pakistan, where aid disbursement for them has been admittedly very slow. Both Yoshikawa and MOFA's new division director for Af-Pak assistance in a subsequent meeting confided that it has been difficult to identify strong host country leadership and to get "concrete proposals and projects" from the GOP. Clearly keenly interested in living up to its substantial Pakistan aid commitments, the GOP is frustrated with a dearth of impetus and direction from the GOP. Amb. Yoshikawa is optimistic, however, about possibilities for building on a recent collaborative GOP and multi-donor effort used to put together a regional development strategy for Malakand. Japan experts, along with U.S., United Kingdom, UN, colleagues contributed to this pilot strategy which will be presented by the GOP at the August 24-25 Friends of Pakistan ministerial meeting in Istanbul. Special Representative Yoshikawa will lead the GOJ delegation there and indicated that he will also participate in the Friends of Pakistan meeting scheduled on fringe of September 24 UN General Assembly.

15. (C) Following the visit with Ambassador Yoshikawa, AID Counselor also met new MOFA director for Af-Pak assistance Hikariko Ono, who moved from most recent stint as the foreign policy speech writer for Prime Minister Aso to now manage new upgraded division in the Ministry's International Cooperation Bureau. Ono focused on increased attention to Pakistan, quicker disbursing assistance and ensuring that Japan lives

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up to its huge Pakistan aid pledge. She also revealed that the Foreign Ministry has several scenarios prepared in its Pakistan aid planning, with MOFA is holding major programming decisions pending the results of Japan's elections. MOFA is gaming that the DPJ will favor projects there and elsewhere with more of a "human focus" such as greater investment in basic education, health, and small farmer agriculture, vice the LDP's generalized top interests of infrastructure and promotion of economic growth. Thus, while the DPJ's thin foreign policy manifesto lists roughly similar development aid goals as those of the LDP, ultimate decisions on the focus of its Pakistan aid package could also portend broader shifts in Japan's global aid priorities under a DPJ-led government.
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